

May 1, 2016

Margaret Chanchalashvili

Great Neck, NY

Honorable Colleen McMahon
United States District Judge
Southern District of New York
United States Court House
500 Pearl Street
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge McMahon,

I truly appreciate the time you are taking to read these words about my best friend and father, Moshe Mirilashvili. With a broken heart I write the most difficult words I have ever needed to say. My name is Margie Chanchalashvili. I am Moshe's second and youngest daughter. I am 40 years old, and I have been married for almost 22 years. I am a simple woman and a mother of two amazing girls. My full time job is taking care of my family, and it is a job I care deeply about.

My father Moshe, who I like to call Papiko, has been the most important person in my life since the day I was born. I was born in 1976 in the United States. My parents immigrated from Georgia to the US in the mid 70's due to religious persecution. My grandfather, Moshe's father, was imprisoned due to anti-semitism and was eventually killed in a Soviet prison when my father was 12 years old.

I learned what it means to be a hard worker through the example my father set for me. For as long as I can remember, my father has been an incredibly committed man- it is a quality that defines him. He never complains about anything. He approaches his work with so much dignity and energy. Growing up with immigrant parents, I always felt the struggles they experienced. As a child, I carefully observed the way my father would approach pain and conflict. After coming home in the mornings from his night shifts at the hospital, and after working long hours as a taxi driver, my dad would come home only to find piles of medical books to help him prepare for his exams. He never complained. He did everything with a smile on his face and tirelessly reassured us that everything would be okay. He did everything he could to provide us with the best, and he always did this with sweetness in his soul and a smile on his face. My grandmother, my father's mother, was a widow and she lived with us for 25 years. My dad took the best care of my grandmother and made sure she was always comfortable. My father is the youngest of his siblings, but he assumed the vital role as everyone's caretaker. Our family always relied on him.

It was very important to my father for my sister and I to receive a proper religious education. He worked extra shifts as a nighttime cab driver so he could afford our private religious education. He wanted us to feel connected to our heritage and be part of a strong community. The idea of community was always very important to my father. He always told my sister and I not only to be members of our community, but to strive to be leaders of our community. I owe my strong faith in G-d and my spirituality to my father. He worked so hard for this, and it was so important to him. It is because of his deep investment in my life I have such a strong faith in G-d and my religion. My father taught me that education should be my priority and to always contribute to others. My father's passion was to provide my sister and I with the best education. He always made sure we took our education seriously. He taught me that education should be my priority, and the key to a fulfilling life is knowledge. It wasn't just about getting good grades and doing well on tests, but about developing a sincere love for learning and a strong foundation of the world around us. In Georgian, my father would always tell us: "Great learners make great leaders."

My mother's parents also immigrated to the US during the same time. My father did everything to help them assimilate to a new place. He refused to leave them behind in Georgia, and he played a huge role in their life in the U.S. He provided them with financial and personal assistance. My grandfather was diagnosed with [REDACTED] at a young age, and he passed away 16 years ago. When he was alive, my father did everything he could to find the best medical care for my grandfather. My grandfather was in the hospital frequently, and my father would never leave him alone. My grandmother is still alive, but she is very ill. She relies on my father immensely for care and assistance. She always says that Moshe is another son to her.

Many Georgian immigrants settled in Forest Hills, where my family also resided. Everyone knew each other, and everyone tried to look out for each other. Many members of the community turned to my father for support. Whether it was medical advice, moral support, or friendly conversation, everyone turned to my father. As a young child, I vividly remember getting phone-calls late at night from people in our community when they had medical emergencies. My father would always run out to help them no matter what time it was. He always made sure that they received the proper care and attention they deserved. He never said no to anyone.

My favorite quote is a quote by Maya Angelou: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." And I must say that people never forgot how my father made them feel. He approaches everyone with a rare form of humble kindness, and that quality is something I try to emulate on a daily basis. Even now, when I go to events for the Georgian community, people come up to me and tell me stories about how my dad saved their life: how my dad never left their side in the hospital until he knew they were okay, how my dad helped them find a job, or how my father would treat them medically for free because he knew they had no money. When people immigrate to a new country, the only thing they can rely on to maintain their sense of normalcy is their community. My father recognized this, and strived to make his community better. Again, I strive to be as kind, compassionate, and caring as my father is.

My parents always have guests over to their house. If they heard a friend was coming to the

U.S., my father would invite them over for dinner and offer a place for them to stay. He always taught us to keep the doors open for everyone and anyone, friends or strangers. It is again because of his deep investment in our community I have such a strong compassion in helping others as much as I can. To never turn any one down when in need, and for me to give back to my community.

My father's kindness was always abundantly clear to me, but it deeply impacted me when I was in high school. When I was 17 years old, my best friend Michael was in a tragic accident which led him to be paralyzed from the waist down. Michael's parents were out of town at the time and his family was suffering financially. I was with Michael during this tragic accident. A car ran over him and dragged him down the road. Instantly, I called my father. Without question or hesitation, my father came to the hospital with us. He was constantly communicating with doctors and making sure that Michael was taken care of properly. My high school was raising money for Michael's medical bills, and my father would always donate money to help fund his medical bills. At the time, I did not have a driver's license, and my father would always find time on the weekends to drive me and my friends to visit Michael in rehab. After this unfortunate situation, my young self truly realized the importance of kindness and selflessness. My father helped my friend so deeply. Since then, I truly make a conscious and consistent effort to channel my father's kindness and help others.

On a different note, when I was 25, I had a [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. During these painful times, my father never left my side. Every day, for eight months, he cared for and comforted me. My mom was with my kids, my husband had to work, but it was my father who was always with me. After my awful surgical experiences, my father did extensive research to find me the best urologist. Finally, my father found Dr. Michael Grasso, chief urologist at Saint Vincent's hospital. He was the only doctor back then that had a special instrument that detects stones that have been blasted through the ureters walls, without poking and damaging the ureter further. I was operated on right away because I was in such severe pain. My surgery was finally a success, and Dr. Grasso saved my kidney. This would not have been possible without the research my father did. I was in the hospital for 4 days after my surgery, and my father never left my side. He was my rock and always reminded me to stay strong.

When I got married 22 years ago, my parents and my in-laws did everything they could to help us start our new life together. My father treated my husband like a son from the day of our engagement. My father was always there for us in every way. He even helped furnish my home. When I had my first daughter, Jessica, my father wanted me to move back into his house for a few months because he wanted to make sure that Jessica had the best care possible. I was very young. Although I did not move back in with my parents, my father and my mother came over every day to help take care of Jessica. Back then and even today, spending time with his grandchildren is his ultimate happiness.

Three years later I had my second daughter, Nicole. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

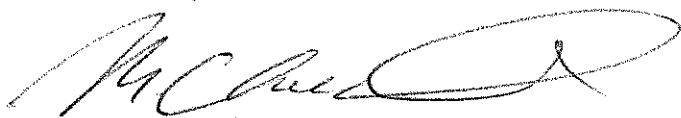
My father also has a very loving relationship with my daughter, Jessica. They share a love for literature and history, and they frequently exchange ideas about 19th century literature over dinner. Jessica is an aspiring writer, and my father encourages her to explore her creativity and imagination. He asks to read her work and offers advice and opinions about what she gives him. Jessica is currently at Sarah Lawrence College, where she studies literature and writing. He is so proud that she takes her education so seriously. Jessica always turns to my father for advice, encouragement, and really values his opinion.

My mother, my sister, my niece, my children, my husband, and my brother-in-law have a deep love and admiration for my father. I miss waking up to his phone-calls every morning, and I miss falling asleep after talking to him at night. I miss his strong words, his advice, his calming presence, and his positive outlook on life. He still reminds me to be happy every day, except instead of saying those words from his living room, he is now saying those words from jail. He would always worry about his family, and cared about making sure we were okay. Now, the roles have reversed, and we are the ones who worry about him. The man who cultivated our strength and inspired our kindness is far away, and we need him. I worry about his happiness and his health. And truly, I am worried that he will die in jail from a broken heart.

Your honor, like I said before, I am a simple woman. My words are not fancy but my feelings are honest. I am a woman with a broken heart. My father took my heart away with him, and I will never be the same until he comes back. Although I am living, I certainly do not feel like I am alive. I feel like I did not write this letter to a stranger, I sat through my father's trial from beginning to end. I feel as if I know you, and I trust in you. Knowing you makes it easier for me to confide in you. I am begging you: begging for leniency and mercy on my dad when sentencing.

Your honor, you are our last hope. He is old. Thank you for your time and thank you for reading my words. Please, bring me back my Papiko.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Chanchalashvili', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Margaret Chanchalashvili